

All claims stand rejected, either under Section 102 or 103, in view of Oshima, Klinefelter, and/or Minkus.

It is respectfully urged that Oshima and Klinefelter are inapposite, and, accordingly, Minkus (as only an obviousness reference, linked with Klinefelter or Oshima) becomes irrelevant.

It is important to note that the present invention is not of a method involving or producing a laminated identification tag. In fact, the present invention *obviates* the need for lamination, because of the "welding" of the image into the plastic of the identification tag blank itself. The polyester film mentioned in the disclosure is not melted or adhered to the plastic tag blanks. It is not (as discussed, beginning on Page 7, line 19) deposited onto tag blanks, but is (and remains as a carrier) an elongate strip which, during the heat cycle, "traps" the melted plastic of the tag blank itself long enough for the image to "weld" into the tag blank (see Page 8, line 12, et seq.). After processing, the tag is complete it is removed from the polyurethane strip.

Both Klinefelter and Oshima teach tag laminations. Klinefelter is clearly not teaching or suggesting the "welding" of images into the tag blanks as does the present inventor. In Column 2, line 50, et seq, Klinefelter teaches that, as one embodiment of his invention, paper tags may be used (clearly not a tag blank for with which the present invention may be practiced). If his invention includes the use of paper tags, it cannot be said to encompass an invention which, at its heart, relies on the welding of images through the melting of the plastic of the tag blanks involved.

Oshima deals exclusively with either "sublimable" or "hot-melt" inks and laminate materials. Clearly, Oshima is teaching the application of something other than mere printed images, which are then "welding" into the substrate plastic, and definitely teaches the application of an added plastic layer which may even carry the image itself. Conversely, one of the very objectives (and effects)

of the present invention (see Page 7, line 5, et seq) is the ability to use images produced through, for example, simple ink jet technology, yet produce a durable identification tag, without the necessity of such things as protective layers, hot-melt inks, etc. Oshima and the present inventors are headed in completely opposite directions.

Please note that even the broadest present claim recites that the heat is applied for a sufficient time to weld the indicia (not the thin plastic film) to the tag blank.

In view of the above, it is submitted that Claims 1 - 8 are in a condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections and objections are hereby requested. Allowance of Claims 1 - 8 at an early date is solicited.

If impediments to allowance of Claims 1 - 8 remain, and a telephone conference between the undersigned and the examiner would help remove such impediments in the opinion of the examiner, a telephone conference is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



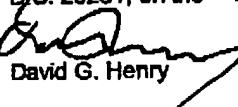
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, DC 20231, on the 19th day of December 2002.

  
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